

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Grand County High School
608 South 400 East
Moab, Utah 84532**

March 8-9, 2006



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

Grand County High School

608 South 400 East

Moab, Utah 84532

March 8-9, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

**Brett Moulding, Director
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist
Curriculum and Instruction**

Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education.....	iii
Grand County School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
Grand County High School Administration and Staff.....	2
Grand County High School Mission Statement and Belief Statements.....	3
Members of the Visiting Team	4
Visiting Team Report.....	5
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	5
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	6
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	6
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness.....	6
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals.....	7
Curriculum Development.....	7
Quality Instructional Design	8
Quality Assessment Systems	9
Leadership for School Improvement.....	9
Community Building.....	11
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	11
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI.....	12
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	13
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	14

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 8-9, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Grand County High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Tom Brown is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Grand County High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Grand County High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

250 East 500 South
P. O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer
66 Canterbury Circle
Logan, UT 84321
Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 6

Tim Beagley
3974 South 3550 West
West Valley City, UT 84119
Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 11

Bill Colbert
14866 Village Vista Dr.
Draper, UT 84020
Phone: (801) 572-1608

District 2

Greg W. Haws
5841 West 4600 South
Hooper, UT 84315
Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 7

Randall A. Mackey
1172 East 100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
Phone: (801) 582-4237

District 12

Mark Cluff
645 West Hubbard Cir
Alpine, UT 84004
Phone: (801) 756-7623

District 3

Edward Dalton
1323 Bryan Road
Erda, UT 84074
Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 8

Janet A. Cannon
5256 Holladay Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 13

Thomas Gregory
1056 West 1150 South
Provo, UT 84601
Phone: (801) 607-4702

District 4

Richard Sadler
875 Edgewood Dr.
Ogden, UT 84403
Phone: (801) 479-7988

District 9

Gary C. Swensen
1101 Framewood Ln
Taylorsville, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 281-8746

District 14

Dixie Allen
218 West 5250 North
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 5

Kim R. Burningham
932 Canyon Crest Drive
Bountiful, UT 84010
Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 10

Laurel Brown
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln
Murray, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 15

Debra G. Roberts
Box 1780
Beaver, UT 84713
Phone: (435) 438-5843

Bonnie Jean Beesley*

1492 East Kristianna Cir.
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
Phone: (801) 359-0295

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East
Logan, UT 84341-2851
Phone: (435) 754-0216

Patti Harrington

Executive Officer

Twila B. Affleck

Secretary

**Board of Regents Appointments*

9/8/2005

GRAND COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kaaron JorgenPresident
Bryon Walston Vice President
Ron Olsen..... Member
Deb Hren Member
Jim Webster Member

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Ron Ferguson..... Superintendent
Verna Butcher Supervisor, Transportation and Maintenance
Doug Cannon Business Manager
Cari Caylor..... Director, Applied Technology Education
Taryn Kay Director, Student Services
Alex Leech..... Supervisor, School Lunch
Robb Welch Director, Buildings and Grounds

GRAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Tom Brown..... Principal
John Huitt..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Peggy Nissen..... Counselor

Support Staff

Libby Vaccaro, Secretary	Julia Bates, Paraprofessional
Kathie Holyoak, Attendance Secretary	Dean Dalton, Custodian
Shirley Fredriksen, Bookkeeper	David Lance, Custodian
Suzann Hill, Counseling Aide	John Mealey, Paraprofessional
Tamara Larsen, Counseling Aide	Stan Noorlander, Custodian
Debbie Nash, Paraprofessional	Tim Stewart, Custodian
Mara Leech, Paraprofessional	Chris Seck, Paraprofessional
Carolyn Noyes, Paraprofessional	Kenna Watkins, EDNET Facilitator

Faculty

Hal Adams	Tom Eyler	Bryan Nelson
Ryan Anderson	Maralee Francis	Bernie Radcliffe
Sue Anderson	Joan Gough	Laura Reed
Chris Becker	Steve Hazlett	Janna Rogers
Leticia Bentley	Steven Hren	Jeff Richards
James Calkins	Richard Jenkinson	Tiffany Swafford
Cari Caylor	Gary Karasick	Traci Thompson
Kent Dalton	Edward Keyes	Ed Welling
Carl Dastrup	Lin Kolb	Dennis Wells
Ed DeFrancia	Deanna Mecham	
Ron Dolphin	Melissa Meldrum	

GRAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Drawing upon the unique resources of Grand County, we will foster educational excellence in a safe environment where all students may acquire the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to contribute and adapt to a diverse and ever-changing world.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Education is an opportunity.
- Parents, students, and school personnel working together promote life-long learning.
- Students and school personnel need to be effective communicators capable of using oral, written, artistic, mathematical, and technological forms of expression.
- Students need to learn and practice socially responsible behavior.
- Learning is a life-long process.
- Students need to be resourceful thinkers capable of solving problems, both independently and collaboratively.
- Students need to be self-directed individuals who establish personal goals that satisfy both themselves and societal needs.
- Students and staff have the right to an educational environment that is safe and challenging.
- Students must do their own work, learn from their own successes and mistakes, focus on the present task, and be self-disciplined.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Andrew Odoardi, Cottonwood Youth Academy, Visiting Team Chairperson

Tim Lowe, Dixie High School, Washington School District

Rick Pruitt, Richfield High School, Sevier School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

GRAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Grand County High School, in Moab, Utah, is a fairly new (nine-year-old) building in Moab. It has an enrollment of approximately 480 students in grades 9-12, and is in its ninth year of teaching on the trimester system. It has a student makeup of 87.3 percent Caucasian, 7.2 percent Native American/Alaskan Native, 4.9 percent Hispanic, 0.4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2 percent African-American. The student body appears to work well together, with few problems stemming from racial discrimination. This is a full-service high school that offers a varied curriculum, with room for students to explore options for careers through on-site teaching and EDNET learning.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

1. Data is organized, disaggregated, and analyzed in an effective manner.
2. The administration and lead teachers seriously addressed the changes that were recommended in the last review.
3. It is also evident that the faculty is aware of what it wants Grand County High School's students to "look like" when they leave the school.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

1. The school should continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is suggested that the school collaborate with the district in designing an effective management system that can be utilized by different stakeholders within the school community. This effort should extend to disaggregating school-based assessments and state and national norm-referenced test data by content cluster, gender, grade level, and ethnicity.
2. The broad range of opportunities provided for the students needs to part of the profile. The Visiting Team received additional data during the visit that reflected the significant levels of student participation in school activities including the list of clubs and organizations.
3. The Visiting Team recommends that the school mobility factor be included in the school profile. The team also recommends that the school

continue to monitor the data reflecting progress and student gains in literacy and numeracy.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

The administration and faculty are encouraged to continue their efforts with extra academic support for students who require additional instruction in order to achieve school success.

Develop a means to reflect the correlation between GPA and test scores.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

This is a total effort! This is an outstanding example of professional collegiality working toward common goals, with the student being the main focus. A consensus-building process was put in place involving members of the faculty, focus groups, department chairpersons, parents, students, and administrators. The process included review, revisions, and producing the final draft after some feedback was received from the stakeholders. The final statement of the school's beliefs and mission and desired results for student learning (DRSLs) were distributed to teachers and parents. The mission statement and DRSLs need to be posted in every classroom and throughout the building.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study is very honest and forthright in describing the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. It is a quality example of reflective practice and serves as a foundation for the action plans.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Grand County High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

Communication
Thinking

Collaboration
Work Ethic
Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility
Global Awareness

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Ground County High School has worked very hard to involve faculty members and the community in the collaborative process to build a shared vision. Teachers have had ample opportunities to attend workshops, in-service, and conferences. The school has made attempts, but has had limited success, at bringing the local community into the process. In addition, a constant effort will be required to increase teacher and community involvement and buy-in.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The school's beliefs and mission statement clearly identify what the school's administration and faculty believe are necessary for the students to achieve success in life. The mission statement shows a very positive view of each student's potential and the school's commitment to helping them achieve that potential. The statements are comprehensive, and address key issues pertinent to the decision-making and policy development in the school. The belief statements indicate that the students **are** the top priority of the school community.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The mission and belief statements align clearly to support the DRSLs.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

After visiting with various staff members, the leadership team, and department heads, it is evident that the collaborative efforts toward student improvement are based on the Utah Core Curriculum. The faculty is working together to clearly define standards that support both the Utah Core and their selected DRSLs. The

DRSLs mirror the Life Skills Curriculum.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There is significant evidence that the staff and administration have developed a culture of collaboration and inquiry that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning. The staff has split into teams to focus on various areas relating to student learning. They have also begun the process of curriculum mapping.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During classroom observations, the Visiting Team observed efforts to incorporate many forms of learning experiences in the classroom. There were examples ranging from standard lecture to many hands-on activities and the use of visuals. The Visiting Team found students at work in labs, doing individual written work, and participating in group work and discussion.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional strategies being used in the classroom. Technology, cross-curricular cooperation, design briefs, overheads, multimedia, labs and hands-on activities, and graphic organizers during instruction are examples of the variety of strategies that the students experienced. Teachers were observed using specific instructional strategies to start and end classes on an academic note that connects to the lesson or unit.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The students are provided on a consistent basis with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to improve their learning. The students have numerous options for enhancing their educational opportunities and receiving additional instruction or assistance. There are many programs that expose students to extracurricular activities and education. The opportunities for credit recovery are well articulated and utilized by students needing the assistance. The Math Department tracks students and mentors those who are experiencing difficulty in math.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

In each of the classes visited, the assessment process seems to be an ongoing process that involves a number of different methods. The immediate assessment/feedback method appeared to be the most prevalent and useful. In addition, it is evident that most of the classroom teachers have developed assessments and instruments designed for remediation in their particular subject area. The departments indicate a sincere effort to address the desired results for student learning, but now need to develop ways to assess how students meet the indicators and standards for each desired result for student learning.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

It is evident that the assessments used are in keeping with the mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs. The staff is cognizant of the process of helping students through the four-year high school period, and this is evident in what is happening in classrooms. The range of assessments in use has identified the information the faculty feels is necessary to make decisions about student learning needs, but they need assistance and time to further articulate and accurately interpret the data for use in subsequent instruction. Training in formative and summative assessment techniques and analysis of data should be included as topics of professional development.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Visiting Team, in discussions with teachers, students, and counselors, found that assessments of student learning and grading practices are fair. The performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are established and shared with students in advance of the assessment and are consistently applied on an equitable basis.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is evidence that the leadership team has made strong efforts to promote quality instruction and that administrators foster an academic learning climate.

They actively support teaching and learning by creating a dynamic action plan that involves faculty and leadership collaboration on a regular basis. The school is divided into focus groups and departments, and there are many opportunities for cross-curriculum programs that improve student learning in areas of writing, service, and critical thinking.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The administration and faculty have shown that they have done research concerning their students. They have taken the data and have collaborated concerning what the results show. They have incorporated many of these results into their action plan in a collaborative way.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The Visiting Team found that the administration monitors test scores and other data that display student achievement. They are working on processes to evaluate instructional effectiveness. Over the next several years they will create a comprehensive assessment program to examine results of student learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The administration has divided responsibilities to more effectively manage the school. There is a close relationship among the school, police, courts, and parents. It is evident that the school is a safe place to receive an education, and the students were engaged in learning in an efficient and effective learning environment.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The school leadership has allocated the available resources to effectively align with the school's goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and the school action plans.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leaders have made a strong effort to include the school community in

its responsibility for student learning. They have a good community council that has reflected on the desired results for student learning. Activities of the school are shown on a local TV channel each day, and the school has created a web site to share its goals and efforts in student improvement.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Grand County High School is committed to fostering a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The school has many committees and organizations that involve students and parents.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school is working toward building a collaborative network of support within the community. The school also offers many clubs and extracurricular activities that engage the students.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The leadership meets weekly to discuss the progress of the process. The faculty meets at least once each month to work specifically on the process of improving the school. The suggestion was made to allow a student representative on the leadership team, and it will be explored. Most significantly, the school leadership teams are in place to continue the work began in the self-study.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Grand County High School is committed to analyzing and evaluating its data to provide staff development. The administration supports teachers and staff members in their efforts to improve. Mentors and coaches have been assigned to the inexperienced teachers. Staff members are encouraged to attend various professional training sessions and seminars.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Grand County High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the

subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Grand County High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Grand County High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plans clearly address the critical areas for follow up. The action plans address the major concerns identified by the staff and reflected in the profile data. They effectively identify critical areas for improvement. The entire staff is encouraged to focus its efforts on those areas articulated in the action plans that will directly affect student learning and student achievement.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The majority of the school participated in the process of developing the action plan. The community was involved in this process, and a general feeling of

commitment exists. The administration is very positive as well as realistic in its evaluation of how committed the faculty is to the process and the completion of the action plans. It was evident to the Visiting Team that the leadership team, administration, and many members of the teaching staff share a strong commitment to the action plans. The administration acknowledges that total buy-in to the process will take time and commitment on its part.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The follow-up processes are generally sound. More attention needs to be given to indicators of improvement or movement toward the desired results for student learning. The school has set dates for accomplishing the action plans. The plans need to be more specific in indicating responsibility and how progress will be communicated to the school community. In order to monitor school improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership needs to identify what data/evidence should be collected and periodically/incrementally analyzed by the team. The Visiting Team suggests incremental benchmarks and analyses of how the data from the findings affects instructional strategies, instructional delivery, and curriculum content.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team found that the Grand County High School community lives its belief statements.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and staff of Grand County High for a remarkable job of retaining students from 9th grade through graduation.
- The Visiting Team commends Grand County High for its demonstrated honesty and candor in observed practice and in the school's self-study.
- The Visiting Team commends Grand County High for its most professional response to the experience and recommendations of the previous Visiting Teams and the last site visit.
- The Visiting Team commends Grand County High School's spirit of collaboration and disposition to dialogue, which resulted in broadening the role of leadership beyond the principal's office.

- The Visiting Team commends the extent to which Grand County High has engaged the students in the life of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends the high expectations Grand County High holds for itself and its students, and the school's dedication to knowing who is and is not learning.

Recommendations:

The Visiting Team is in substantial agreement with the quality and number of recommendations that come out of the departmental and focus group analyses and the goals stated in the action plans. These are indicative of the high quality of the self-study effort and the integrity of the processes in working to develop the school improvement plans. Taken together, however, they present too broad an effort to be effective within a reasonable time frame.

The Visiting Team wishes to provide some focus for the school's improvement processes and link them to attainable results by virtue of the following recommendations.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty continue to utilize time and opportunities to develop collaboration skills, share best practices, and emphasize implementing the school's action plan and recommendations from the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan include a professional development component on how to establish benchmarks, and a timeline for long- and short-term goals with realistic benchmarks leading to the dates for implementation and completion. Responsibility for goal achievement might be more specifically noted. The plan ought to be reviewed and revised to reflect the results of continuous data collection and analysis by the departments and continuing focus groups.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty collectively study best practices and research in the teaching and assessing of the school's DRSLs, and identify indicators and establish standards for students' demonstration of the DRSLs. Each department should develop a means of evaluating student work tied to the DRSLs in order to determine whether or not students become more effective communicators and better critical thinkers, writers, and citizens, and so on.